

sad. As early as the end of the seventeenth century Rapin noted the connection between this national trait and our tragic poetry: 'Les Anglais ont le plus de génie pour la Tragedie et par leur esprit, qui se plait aux choses atroces, et par le caractère de leur langue, qui est propre aux grandes expressions/

Here, indeed, in the language is the last and not the least of the foundations of English poetic greatness*

French may be clearer for reasoning, more graceful for conversation, thanks to the polishing of ages, like stones smoothed and rounded by the unrelenting waves: English, with its mixture of strength and sweetness, of blunt Saxon shortness and undulating Latin sonority, has a wider range and a more mysterious depth; able now to hurl its harsh monosyllables at the poor player— That *struts* and *frets* his hour upon the stage, now to settle like a sea-bird on its long ocean-swell and—

The multitudinous seas incarnadine.

A Spanish Ambassador of Elizabeth's day may have complained that he was insulted by being assigned for entertainment to a person of so plebeianly brief a name as 'John Cuts'; two centuries later one Pinkerton may have proposed to repair this general defect of our tongue by adding to it Italian terminations; but, as de Quincey says, luckilissime this proposalio of die absterdissimo Pinkertonio was not adopted by anybodyini whateverano', and a juster appreciation of our forcible brevity came

from Madame de Stael, who observes of
Macbeth's *the
table is full: 'Si Ton disait en fran^{ais}
precis&nent les
memes mots, "la table est remplie", le plus
grand acteur
du monde ne pourrait, en les d&lamant,
faire oublier
leur acceptioa commune/ As Chapman puts
it:
No tongue hath the Muses* utterance direct
For verse and that sweet music to the ear